

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This discipline-specific manual prescribes technical guidance to Federal and State Track Inspectors regarding investigative and monitoring activities to assure railroad compliance with the Track Safety Standards (TSS). The guidance provided by this manual may be revoked or modified without prior notice by memorandum of the Associate Administrator for Safety. All activities shall be in accordance with the policies and guidelines contained in the Safety Assurance and Compliance Program General Manual.

Inspectors engaged in track investigation activities should refer to this manual as often as necessary to obtain a clear understanding of their roles in the implementation of the track safety program. If in doubt as to the meaning of any paragraph in the manual, an Inspector must promptly apply to his/her Regional Track Specialist for an explanation.

A discussion of the TSS in this manual provides technical guidance for each section, but is not to be construed as a modification, alteration, or revision of the published standards. This manual is Government property and must be treated as such. Comments and suggestions for future changes and additions are invited and should be forwarded to the Associate Administrator for Safety.

The Inspector's first concern is personal safety and that of any accompanying personnel. Inspectors shall conduct activities in accordance with the safety instructions contained in the General Manual. In addition, specific instructions related to 49 CFR Part 214 Subpart C (Roadway Worker Protection) are contained in the Workplace Safety Compliance Manual.

Track Inspection Procedures

An Inspector's primary duty is to conduct effective inspections to determine whether the railroads are complying with the TSS. Effective investigation requires identification, professional evaluation, and accurate reporting of safety conditions and practices. Inspections may vary considerably in scope and detail, depending upon the circumstances in each case.

The examination of records, of track components and the measurement of track geometry for the determination of compliance with Federal requirements is the responsibility of the Inspector. Railroads are not required to furnish transportation, equipment, material, or labor to assist the Inspector.

Since the purpose of regular inspection activity is to evaluate the performance of the carrier and the carrier's representatives in carrying out their responsibilities, a search of the track inspection records maintained by the carrier, as required by 49 CFR §§ 213.241 and 213.369

will be required. Omission, deletion, or uncorrected defects noted on these reports give clues to the Inspector on locations where close inspection may be required.

To save time and facilitate a more complete investigation, as well as to gain the cooperation of the railroads, the following preparations should be made:

- # Obtain the names and the headquarters of the Track Supervisors, Roadmasters, Division Engineers, and District or Regional Engineers of Track in the territory to be inspected.
- # Advise the division, district, or regional engineer of the territory to be inspected and invite them to have a railroad representative accompany you.
- # Set a date and location for the start of the inspection.
- # If a change becomes necessary, make every effort to contact and personally inform the person with whom these plans were made and/or the person(s) who will be affected by the change of plans.
- # If long distances are involved and the railroad desires its representatives to accompany you, determine if transportation will be furnished.
- # If time permits, secure the following information from the railroad in advance as it will be helpful during the investigation:
 - ! Timetables and special instructions covering territory to be inspected, showing method of operation, maximum allowable speeds, permanent speed restrictions, equipment, and loading restrictions.
 - ! Trains per day in each direction, average tonnage, amount of hazardous materials movement.
 - ! Locations, speeds, and reason for existing temporary slow orders.
 - ! Optionally, copies of the current maintenance-of-way work program for the territory to be covered by the investigation, along with a record of work performed in the same territory the previous year.
- # Have readily available a copy of the TSS, Track Compliance Manual, Workplace Safety Compliance Manual, and track measuring equipment.

In addition to the specific elements contained in this manual regarding track inspection procedures, refer to the General Manual Part IV Chapter 2 for information regarding property

entry, refusal to permit inspections, forcible interference with official duties, release for entry, and strike or labor disputes.

Opening Conference

Before starting an inspection the Inspector shall introduce themselves to all present. At a convenient time, the inspector shall obtain a list of names, with titles and headquarters, of those personnel participating in the investigation.

The Inspector should explain the reason for the investigation as being one or more of the following:

- # Routine - to observe the general condition of the track, material and track geometry and to note specific locations where track conditions do not meet Federal standards for the prescribed speeds.
- # Complaint - of unsafe track conditions by an individual, a group of individuals, municipalities, or union organizations. However, the Inspector should not divulge the identity of the complainant.
- # Determination - of factors involved in a derailment.

All parties should be informed that the Inspector's job is to help the carrier to improve railroad safety, and the inspector should solicit their cooperation and welcome suggestions and advice.

Closing Conference

Upon completion of an inspection, the Inspector shall confer with the owner, operator, or employer representative and present all conditions and practices disclosed by the investigation that may constitute safety violations. The Inspector should also indicate the applicable section or sections of the standards that may have been violated. Appropriate copies of the completed track inspection form will be left with the owner's representative at the conclusion of the conference.

Refer to the General Manual, Chapter IV, Part 4 for photography guidelines and Chapter IV, Part 5 for details regarding follow-up activities.

End of Chapter 1